

## CLAIMS

- 1 1. A circuit comprising:
  - 2 a sensor having at least one output port at which a first signal voltage is provided in
  - 3 response to the presence of a magnetic field of a first polarity and at which a second signal
  - 4 voltage is provided in response to the presence of magnetic field of a second polarity; and
  - 5 a detector having at least one input port coupled to the at least one output port of the
  - 6 sensor and an output port at which an output signal is provided, the output signal being
  - 7 indicative of the presence of said magnetic field of said first polarity and the presence of said
  - 8 magnetic field of said second polarity.
- 1 2. The circuit of claim 1 wherein said sensor is a Hall element.
- 1 3. The circuit of claim 1 wherein said magnetic field is provided by an article and said  
2 detector output signal is indicative of the article being positioned within a predetermined  
3 distance of said sensor.
- 1 4. The circuit of claim 1 wherein said detector is a comparator.
- 1 5. A switching system for providing a signal in response to an article which provides a  
2 magnetic field, the switching system comprising:
  - 3 (a) a sensor for sensing the magnetic field of the magnetic article, said sensor for  
4 generating a first signal voltage having a signal voltage level which is proportional to a  
5 magnetic field having a first polarity and a second signal voltage having a signal voltage level  
6 that is proportional to a magnetic field having a second different polarity; and
  - 7 (b) a threshold detection circuit coupled to the sensor to receive the first and second signal  
8 voltages and to provide an output signal having a first value when said magnetic article is  
9 within a predetermined distance of the sensor regardless of the polarity of the magnetic field.
- 1 6. The switching system of Claim 5 wherein:

2       said sensor is a magnetic-field-to-voltage transducer for generating a first signal  
3       voltage having a signal voltage level which is proportional to a magnetic field having a first  
4       polarity and a second signal voltage having a signal voltage level that is proportional to a  
5       magnetic field having a second different polarity; and

6       said threshold detection circuit is coupled to said magnetic-field-to-voltage transducer  
7       to receive the first and second signal voltages and to provide an output signal having a first  
8       value when the article is within the predetermined distance of said magnetic-field-to-voltage  
9       transducer regardless of the polarity of the magnetic field with respect to said magnetic-field-  
10      to-voltage transducer.

1       7.      The switching system of Claim 6 wherein:  
2            said magnetic-field-to-voltage transducer is a Hall element circuit; and  
3            said threshold detection circuit is a comparator coupled to said Hall element circuit.

1       8.      The switching system of Claim 7 wherein said comparator is a window comparator  
2       comprising first and second differential pair circuits, each of said first and second differential  
3       pair circuits having an input terminal coupled to one of a pair of outputs from said Hall  
4       element circuit and an output terminal coupled to an output terminal of said comparator.

1       9.      The switching system of Claim 8 further comprising a filter and level shifter circuit  
2       coupled between said Hall element circuit and said comparator.

1       10.     The switching system of Claim 8 further comprising first and second output amplifier  
2       stages, each of the output amplifier stages coupled between a respective one of the output  
3       terminals of the first and second differential pair circuits and the output terminal of said  
4       comparator.

1       11.     The switching system of Claim 10 further comprising an output/buffer amplifier stage  
2       having an input terminal coupled to the output terminal of each of said first and second output  
3       amplifier stages and having an output terminal coupled to the output terminal of said  
4       comparator.

1       12. The switching system of Claim 5 further comprising a temperature and voltage bias  
2       circuit coupled to said comparator, said temperature and voltage bias circuit for maintaining  
3       operating signals in said threshold detection circuit within a predetermined range of operating  
4       signal levels in response to changes in supply voltage and operating temperature.

1       13. A cellular telephone comprising:  
2              a base;  
3              a cover having a first end movably coupled to said base and a second end;  
4              a magnetic article disposed in the second end of said cover, said magnetic article  
5       having a first pole and a second pole; and  
6              a switch disposed in said base, said switch comprising:  
7                  a sensor for sensing the magnetic field of the magnetic article, said sensor for  
8       generating a first signal voltage having a signal voltage level which is proportional to a  
9       magnetic field having a first polarity and a second opposite signal voltage having an  
10      opposite signal voltage level that is proportional to a magnetic field having a second  
11      different polarity; and  
12              a comparator coupled to the sensor to receive the first and second signal  
13       voltages and to provide an output signal having a first value when said magnetic article  
14       is within a predetermined distance of the sensor regardless of the polarity of the  
15       magnetic field.

1       14. The cellular telephone of Claim 13 further comprising a control circuit coupled to said  
2       switch.

1       15. The cellular telephone of Claim 13 wherein said sensor is provided as a magnetic-field-  
2       to-voltage transducer which generates at output terminals a first signal voltage having a first  
3       signal level voltage which is proportional to a magnetic field having a first polarity and a  
4       second signal voltage having a second signal voltage level that is proportional to a magnetic  
5       field having a second different polarity.

1       16. The cellular telephone of Claim 15 wherein:

2        said sensor includes a Hall element; and  
3        said comparator is a window comparator.

1        17. The cellular telephone of Claim 16 wherein said comparator receives signals from said  
2        Hall element and provides an output signal having a first value when said magnetic article is  
3        within the predetermined distance of said Hall element regardless of the polarity of said  
4        magnetic article with respect to said Hall element and provides an output signal having a  
5        second different value when said magnetic article is not within the predetermined distance of  
6        said Hall element regardless of the polarity of said magnetic article with respect to said Hall  
7        element.

1        18. The cellular telephone of Claim 17 said comparator comprises:  
2              a first comparator having a first input terminal adapted to receive a first threshold  
3              voltage, a second input terminal adapted to receive an input voltage from said Hall element,  
4              and an output terminal coupled to an output terminal of said switch; and  
5              a second comparator having a first input terminal adapted to receive the input voltage,  
6              a second input terminal, adapted to receive a second threshold voltage and an output terminal  
7              coupled to an output terminal of said switch.

1        19. The cellular telephone of Claim 18 wherein said first and second comparators are each  
2        provided having a means for including hysteresis.

1        20. The cellular telephone of Claim 18 wherein said switch further comprises means for  
2        changing a switch point of said first and second comparators.

1        21. A method of switching comprising the steps of:  
2        (a) sensing a magnetic field provided by a magnetic article having a first pole and a second  
3        pole wherein said magnetic article has first magnetic field polarity at the first pole and a  
4        second different magnetic field polarity at the second pole;  
5        (b) generating a sensor output signal having a signal level which is proportional to the  
6        magnetic field sensed in step (a), wherein the sensor output signal has a first signal direction

7 when the sensed magnetic field has the first polarity and a second opposite signal direction  
8 when the sensed magnetic field has the second different polarity;  
9 (c) comparing the sensor output signal to one of first and second threshold signal levels;  
10 and  
11 (d) in response to the sensor output signal level reaching or exceeding the one of the first  
12 and second threshold signal levels, providing an output signal having a first signal level  
13 regardless of the direction of the sensor output signal.

1 22. The method of Claim 21 further comprising the step of:  
2 (e) in response to the sensor output signal having a first signal level which is less than the  
3 one of the first and second threshold signal levels, providing an output signal having a second  
4 different signal level regardless of the direction of the sensor output signal.

1 23. The method of Claim 22 wherein, in response to the output signal changing from the  
2 first signal level to the second different signal level the method further comprises the steps of  
3 changing a switch point of a threshold circuit from a first predetermined threshold level to a  
4 second predetermined threshold level.

1 24. The method of Claim 23 wherein the absolute value of the first predetermined  
2 threshold level is greater than the absolute value of the second predetermined threshold level.